

STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONALS

The standards for school social work professionals are an extension of the core *Standards for School Services Professionals* (approved May 20, 1998) of the State of Indiana.

Individuals seeking licensure in school social work must meet both the core set of standards for School Services Professionals and the Standards for School Social Work Professionals. The Standards for School Social Work Professionals reflect the uniqueness of school social work and the roles and functions of the school social worker.

1. Foundations of School Social Work Practice

As a member of the student services team, school social workers work and are a link between the home, school and community. School social workers work within multicultural contexts with the social functioning and social conditions/environments of students to promote and support the student's academic and social success. They advocate for and assist students to accomplish tasks associated with their learning, growth and development toward a fuller realization of their intrinsic dignity, capability and potential. Foundations of school social work practice underlie all functions listed in this document.

Dispositions

School social workers are committed to the code of ethics of the social work profession and federal and state laws and regulations as they pertain to ethical practice, the legal and ethical principles of confidentiality, and legal principles which protect the rights of children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. These

serve as a guide to ethical decision-making. The dispositions that underlie the social work code of ethics include:

1. Service: Social workers help people in need and address social problems.
2. Social justice: They challenge social inequality and injustice and pursue social change.
3. Dignity and worth of the person: They treat each person in a caring and respectful manner.
4. Relationships: They use human relationships as key tools in the change process.
5. Integrity: They are aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, standards and practice, and practice in a manner consistent with them.
6. Confidentiality: They are familiar and comply with the various local, state and federal mandates related to confidentiality.
7. Advocacy: They facilitate change that effectively responds to the needs of students, families, and school systems.

These dispositions serve as a foundation for all functions that follow.

Knowledge

School social workers have knowledge and understanding of:

1. The characteristics and the reciprocal influences of home, school and community which affect the adjustment and learning process of students;

2. Theories of human growth and development in the social environment, including resiliency theory, learning theory, systems theory, communications theory and behavioral theory;
3. Cultural, racial and ethnic diversity; the backgrounds and broad ranges of experiences that shape students' approaches to learning;
4. The needs of at-risk children and children with disabilities and the response of the school community in the form of current federal and state, laws and regulations.

Performances

School social workers demonstrate the ability to:

1. Translate dispositions and legal principles into practice. These are: the professional code of ethics and ethical practice guidelines, federal and state laws and regulations as they pertain to ethical practice, the legal and ethical principles of confidentiality, and legal principles which protect the rights of children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups;
2. Resolve ethical dilemmas that emerge in the practice of school social work;
3. Ensure that children and their families are provided services within the context of multicultural understanding and sensitivities that enhance families' and school's support of the children's learning experiences;
4. Works to empower children their families, educators, and others to gain access to and effectively use school and community resources.

2. Collaboration

School social workers collaborate and consult with families, the school and the community to mobilize resources which promote student learning, growth and development.

Dispositions

School social workers are committed to the importance of:

1. Working with existing resources to enhance students educational functioning;
2. Expanding the availability of resources for students and families;
3. Multidisciplinary teamwork, common goals, and related interventions;
4. The role of the educational process in forming the lives of children;
5. Respect for limitations and opportunities inherent in school/community policies and procedures and the educational process.

Knowledge

School social workers have knowledge and understanding of:

1. Consultation and collaboration and communication theory;
2. Multidisciplinary teamwork;
3. Resources within the school system and community;
4. School/community policies and procedures.

Performances

School social workers demonstrate the ability to:

1. Maintain an effective relationship with students and families, in partnership with the school system and the community;

2. Make appropriate referrals to resources in the school system and in the community;
3. Collaborate with the school system and community agencies to meet current and projected needs of students, families and the school to develop new resources, to integrate services (i.e., school based or school linked services), and evaluate program outcomes;
4. Provide individual consultation in areas of school social work expertise to families, teachers, administrators, other school personnel and community representatives to achieve common goals;
5. Assist in formulating continuous school improvement plans
6. Respect and work within the established confines and constraints of school and community policies and procedures.

3. Assessment

School social workers, individually or as members of a multidisciplinary team, systematically observe, collect data and assess the strengths and needs of the student(s) within the family, school and community environments.

Dispositions

School social workers are committed to the importance of:

1. Objectivity in assessment.

Knowledge

School social workers need knowledge and understanding of:

1. Methods of systematic assessment in order to plan and implement interventions, and evaluate their effects;

2. The learning process as it relate to developmental stages, learning styles, and special learning needs;
3. How to conduct formal and informal assessment of adaptive behavior, social skills, and behavior/emotional health.

Performances

School social workers demonstrate the ability to:

1. Utilize methods of systematic assessment (i.e., Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), psychosocial history), in order to plan and implement interventions and then evaluate their effects;
2. Incorporate information regarding developmental stages, learning styles and special learning needs into the assessment process;
3. Integrate educationally relevant psychosocial data into written reports;
4. Incorporate these assessments into intervention and evaluation plans;
5. Collect appropriate information to document and assess aspects of the various individual and social factors that affect children's learning, using various methodologies including research.

4. Intervention

School social workers develop and implement interventions with individuals, groups, and families, the school system and the community.

Dispositions

School social workers are committed to the importance of:

1. Establishing positive relationships;
2. Utilizing a strengths-based family systems approach;

3. Advocacy;
4. Research-based practice.

Knowledge

School social workers have knowledge and understanding of:

1. Best practices criteria for interventions;
2. Communication and consultation theory;
3. Individual, group, and family counseling theories;
4. Program development, including development of mediation, conflict resolution, school safety and crisis intervention plans;
5. Referral process;
6. Advocacy process;
7. Positive Behavior Support Plans;
8. Parent education;
9. Case management.

Performances

School social workers demonstrate the ability to:

1. Develop and implement plans for strengths-based individual, group, and family interventions;
2. Select and apply the most effective intervention methods and techniques.

5. Prevention

School social workers identify specific needs, create and implement services that promote the healthy emotional growth and resiliency of students in an educational setting.

Dispositions

School social workers are committed to the importance of:

1. Continuous school improvement that contributes to appropriate school and learning environments and a safe, drug-free, and responsive school community.

Knowledge

School social workers have knowledge and understanding of:

1. Designing and implementing proactive school social work services;
2. Mediation/conflict resolution theories;
3. Primary, secondary and tertiary research-based prevention programs;
4. Developing a positive school climate.

Performances

School social workers demonstrate the ability to:

1. Develop a proactive student services plan, based on needs assessment, with key members of the school and community, including the school principal;
2. Identify student populations and provide services to promote emotional and physical well-being in order to enhance educational functioning;
3. Work collaboratively with others.

6. Professional Development -

School social workers evaluate the effectiveness of their practice and are responsible for seeking opportunities to grow professionally and contribute to the professional development of others.

Dispositions

School social workers are committed to the importance of:

1. Self-evaluation;
2. Professional performance evaluation.

Knowledge

School Social workers need knowledge and understanding of:

1. The role of attitudes, perspectives, strengths and needs, as these relate to professional practice and its environment;
2. The limits and boundaries of professional roles within the community;
3. Self-assessment and self-improvement;
4. The process of professional performance evaluation;
5. Methods of inquiry and research;
6. Ethics of practice;
7. Continuous learning;
8. Developing and presenting in-service training.

Performances

School social workers demonstrate the ability to:

1. Use self assessment and performance evaluations to identify areas for professional growth;
2. Actively use professional supervision, evaluation, consultation, collaboration, and continuing education to identify areas for continuing professional development and to improve professional practice;
3. Interpret and utilize research, including current understandings of best practices, to evaluate and guide professional interventions;

4. Provide consultation and training in the areas related to school social work to families, teachers, administrators, other school system personnel, and community representatives to achieve common goals;
5. Engage in continuous learning to enhance professional growth and improve practice.

REFERENCES

California Department of Education (2002). *Pupil Services Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness: School Social Work Specialization Standards*. P. 114-130

Idaho State Board of Education (2002). *Standards for School Social Work*, retrieved from <http://www.sde.state.id.us/MOST/SocialWorker.htm> September 6, 2002.

Illinois State Board of Education (2002). *Title 23: Chapter 1: Subchapter b: Part 23: Standards for the School Service Personnel Certificate*, Illinois Register.

Indiana Professional Standards Board (1998). *School Service Professionals* retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/psb/standards/SchoolServiceContStds.html> October 29, 2002.

Indiana Professional Standards Board (2001). *Standards for School Counseling Professionals*. Retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/psb/standards/CounselorContStds.html> October 29, 2002.

Kentucky Board of Education (2002). *704 KAR 20:194 Social workers standard certification*.

Michigan Department of Education. *School Social Worker R340.1011*, p. 71

National Association of Social Workers (2002). *NASW Standards for School Social Work Services*, retrieved from www.naswdc.org September 6, 2002.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2002). *2002-2003 Guide to National Board Certification*. Retrieved from www.nbpts.org September 6, 2002.